

## California Democrats Call for Expansion of SCHIP Program

Tuesday, 27 February 2007

Thirty-three Members of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation sent a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee calling for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to be funded and expanded.

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Expansion of SCHIP Program

Send Letter to House Budget Committee Urging SCHIP be Funded and Expanded

Washington,  
D.C. - Thirty-three Members of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation sent a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Budget Committee calling for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to be funded and expanded.

California Democrats urged the rejection of President Bush's proposed FY08 budget, which would leave California short on funds needed to continue to cover the 800,000 California children already enrolled in SCHIP programs. The letter also called for SCHIP to be expanded during the reauthorization process to help the 1.4 million children in California who are uninsured.

"President Bush's budget reminds me of Jonathan Swift's 'A Modest Proposal,' which suggested poor Irish adults sell their children as food to wealthy families. The President's budget continues billions in tax breaks for rich adults while drastically underfunding health insurance for children from low- and middle-income families. At a minimum, Congress should allocate the funds necessary to ensure that all children currently covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program can continue to receive necessary care. We should also take advantage of the reauthorization process to expand the program and finally provide health care to all children," said Rep. Pete Stark (CA-13), Chairman of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee.

"While California is beginning to move forward on accessible health care for our state's children, President Bush's proposed FY08 budget fails to provide needed SCHIP funding. California Democrats know that

SCHIP programs deserve enough funding to increase our children's health coverage -- not diminish it -- and will work in Congress towards that end," said Rep. Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), Chair of the California Democratic Congressional Delegation.

"It is absolutely essential that the federal government meets its responsibility to adequately fund SCHIP so that states can provide coverage to uninsured children and reduce the number of uninsured," said Rep. Henry A. Waxman (CA-30), Senior California Member of the Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.

The text of the letter is below:

February 26, 2007

The Honorable John Spratt, Chairman  
House Budget Committee  
309 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Paul Ryan, Ranking Member  
House Budget Committee  
B-71 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

As the budget process moves forward, we urge you to reject the President's FY08 budget recommendation regarding the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Instead, we encourage the Budget Committee to adequately fund SCHIP and provide flexibility for the needed expansion of this program for our nation's low-income children and their families. There are over nine-million children in the United States without health insurance who could be covered by SCHIP if adequately funded.

Rather than allocating new resources to protect coverage under SCHIP, the President's budget effectively cuts SCHIP's scope and funding. His FY2008 budget only includes \$4.8 billion in new SCHIP funding, despite calls from a broad coalition of groups including the American Hospital Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the March of

Dimes, the American Academy of Family Physicians and America's Health Insurance Plans for \$60 billion over the next five years. The President's proposal would put further strain on our community's safety-net hospitals, which are already stretched thin.

Furthermore, the President's proposal undercuts the ability to expand SCHIP, which is due for reauthorization on September 1st, 2007. After the recent stopgap funding Congress provided for SCHIP, the reauthorization of SCHIP would provide a unique opportunity to properly extend and improve health care access for more Americans.

Since its inception ten years ago, SCHIP has helped to reduce the number of uninsured low-income children by one third. California receives over a billion dollars a year from the federal government to support SCHIP, and the program covers over 800,000 Californians. SCHIP's continued success depends on increased funding from Congress. We thank you for your consideration of this matter and we look forward to working with you to extend health care access to more Americans through the FY08 budget and SCHIP reauthorization processes.

Sincerely,

Zoe Lofgren (CA-16), Chair, California Democratic Congressional Delegation

Joe Baca (CA-43)

Xavier Becerra (CA-31)

Howard Berman (CA-28)

Lois Capps (CA-23)

Dennis Cardoza (CA-18)

Jim Costa (CA-20)

Susan Davis (CA-53)

Anna Eshoo (CA-14)

Sam Farr (CA-17)

Bob Filner (CA-51)

Jane Harman (CA-36)

Mike Honda (CA-15)

Tom Lantos (CA-12)

Barbara Lee (CA-9)

Jerry McNerney (CA-11)

Doris Matsui (CA-5)

Juanita Millender-McDonald (CA-37)

George Miller (CA-7)

Grace Napolitano (CA-38)

Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34)

Linda Sanchez (CA-39)

Loretta Sanchez (CA-47)

Adam Schiff (CA-29)

Brad Sherman (CA-27)

Hilda Solis (CA-32)

Pete Stark (CA-13)

Ellen Tauscher (CA-10)

Mike Thompson (CA-1)

Maxine Waters (CA-35)

Diane Watson (CA-33)

Henry Waxman (CA-30)

Lynn Woolsey (CA-6)

The California Democratic Congressional Delegation consists of 34 Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives from California. This group outnumbers all other state House delegations - Republicans and Democrats combined.